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# An Education in the Validity of Pluralism: The Meeting between Presbyterian Mission Teachers and Hispanic Catholics in New Mexico, 1870–1912

*Susan M. Yohn*

An examination of the Protestant women's home mission enterprise at the turn of this century offers an opportunity to chart the process by which women reformers came to redefine the responsibilities of civil government, a crucial first step in the fashioning of a welfare state. More importantly, it provides insight into the alteration of the existing social relations between different ethnic groups. The welfare state was not just the creation of one class, or one group, of social reformers. Like those who provided social services, those who received the services played a central role in their development. In her critique of the argument that welfare agencies were little more than instruments of social control, Linda Gordon has written that the "social control experience was not a simple two-sided tradeoff in which the client sacrificed autonomy and control in return for some material help. Rather, the clients helped shape the nature of the social control itself."<sup>1</sup> Gordon concludes that we err in thinking of the "welfare state" only as a "campaign spearheaded by elites," and in so doing may overlook the "pressure" that clients or recipients exerted for these welfare reforms. The welfare state was not just a paternalistic agency of social control but was also a means by which oppressed groups could gain greater autonomy and empowerment.

The "bargaining" that Gordon finds between social workers and clients also took place between Protestant women missionaries and their clients. This article will focus on the Presbyterian women's home mission

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<sup>1</sup> Linda Gordon, "Family Violence, Feminism, and Social Control," *Feminist Studies* 12 (Fall 1986): 470.

effort in New Mexico, where Anglo-American missionaries opened schools in Hispanic Catholic villages, and will discuss the impact of intergroup “bargaining” on the Anglo-American women.<sup>2</sup> Although missionaries were sent to New Mexico intent on converting Catholics, they achieved success not so much in their evangelical as in their educational work. The effect was to force missionaries to rethink their original assumptions about Catholics, about “Mexicans” (the term mission women used for Hispanics), about the nature of poverty, and about society’s best response to it.<sup>3</sup> Hispanics did gain some benefits from the Protestant mission effort, but the more significant story here is that the “elites” in this case underwent considerable re-education.

The experience of home missionaries reveals the connection between the evangelistic spirit that dominated the nation in the late nineteenth century and the early forms of the welfare state. Because Hispanics resisted evangelical efforts, missionaries could not realize their original agenda. Instead, they were forced to change their goals midstream and focus on providing basic social services rather than on saving souls, a move that led them to look upon Hispanic culture with less disdain and growing acceptance. Recognizing that Hispanics would not assimilate to the degree that they had originally hoped, missionaries arrived at an understanding of cultural pluralism which expressed an appreciation of social diversity but was tempered by their desire to find some “common ground” between different cultures. These new ideas about ethnicity were

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<sup>2</sup> While much attention has been paid to women active in foreign missions, women's home mission activities have not been studied in the same depth. For additional information on women's participation in the home mission movement, see John McDowell, *The Social Gospel in the South: The Woman's Home Mission Movement in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1886–1939* (Baton Rouge, La., 1982); Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874–1939* (New York, 1990); Michael Coleman, “Nor Race, But Grace: Presbyterian Missionaries and American Indians, 1857–1893,” *Journal of American History* 67 (June 1980): 41–60; Jacqueline Jones, “Women Who Were More Than Men: Sex and Status in Freedman's Teaching,” *History of Education Quarterly* 19 (Spring 1979): 47–59; Jacqueline Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865–1873* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1980). For a discussion of black women's participation in home missions, see L. M. Perkins, “The Black Female American Missionary Association Teacher in the South, 1861–1870,” in *Black Americans in North Carolina and the South*, ed. J. J. Crow and F. J. Hatley (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1984), 122–36.

<sup>3</sup> Missionaries referred to their clients interchangeably as “Mexicans” and “Spanish.” I use the term “Hispanic” since it distinguishes mission students and clients from the growing wave of twentieth-century Mexican immigrants. In this particular case, many of the people of northern New Mexico with whom Anglo-Protestants worked traced their connections to New Mexico back to the Spanish settlement of the territory. Others had migrated to the area soon after Mexican independence from Spain. The vast majority of mission school students came from families whose presence in New Mexico predated United States annexation in 1848.

reinforced by mission women's understanding that their own status, both political and economic, was connected to that of their Hispanic clients.

The story begins in the late nineteenth century, when Hispanics living in the small agricultural communities in northern New Mexico were struggling to maintain their economic autonomy. Between 1880 and 1910, New Mexico villages lost almost all commonly held grazing lands. Two million acres of private land, 1.7 million acres of communal lands, and 1.8 million acres of timber lands were taken by the state and federal government without compensation. In addition, stream channels were eroded from overgrazing and timber cutting, reducing the water supply available for farming.<sup>4</sup>

Various means were employed to strip Hispanics of their land. In the 1870s new property taxes posed a hardship for farmers who had little or no cash income, and forced them to sell to land speculators. Many Hispanics did not even have the chance to sell. Uninformed or misinformed about new laws, they failed to pay taxes, and the state repossessed their land. The land was then sold to speculators who evicted the original owners. Even those farmers who retained their land could not add to their holdings. As cattle raising expanded in the late nineteenth century, subsistence farmers lost 80 percent of their land.<sup>5</sup>

Hispanic New Mexicans did offer organized resistance as they lost their land, though it is unclear how many people were involved. In one instance, they organized groups to destroy the fences erected by land speculators and cattle ranchers and created a new political party calling for ethnic unity. In 1889, *Las Gorras Blancas* (the White Caps) in San Miguel County began to attack the property and fences of large land-holders, particularly cattle ranchers. These actions were largely symbolic. Fences represented the end of communal grazing and the growing power of land speculators. There was also an active group of the Knights of Labor, which represented members of *Las Gorras Blancas* when some of them were arrested and tried. In the early 1890s, *El Partido del Pueblo* (The Party of the People), an independent Hispanic political party, was organized. It called for ethnic unity and sought to organize the supporters of *Las Gorras Blancas*. Running candidates in San Miguel County, the party captured each office with an average of 60 percent of the vote. It was particularly popular in communities located on disputed land grants.

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<sup>4</sup> See Clark Knowlton, "Changing Spanish-American Villages in Northern New Mexico," *Sociology and Social Research* 53 (1969): 463 n. 14, 15, 16; and John Burma, *Spanish-Speaking Groups in the United States* (Durham, N.C., 1954), 15.

<sup>5</sup> For a description of the process by which subsistence farmers became wage laborers, see Roxanne Dunbar, "Land Tenure in Northern New Mexico: An Historical Perspective" (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 1974), 10, 207–35.

The Gorras Blancas provides one example of Hispanic resistance to Anglo encroachment, but over the long term landholdings diminished. Hispanic culture proved resilient nevertheless. As Hispanics were unable to earn a living from what little land they retained, they adopted new patterns of migration that encouraged the creation of a “regional community” not necessarily tied to landowning.<sup>6</sup>

Hispanics also responded to the larger economic and political changes by seeking out new educational opportunities. By the 1890s, knowledge of English was a crucial factor in maintaining social status and legal rights, and was a necessity for upward social mobility. Newly established land claims courts required Hispanic landholders to claim title to the land and defend it in court if challenged. Unable to speak and read English, and defend their own claims, Hispanic landowners hired lawyers who, in turn, defrauded their clients and emerged from title battles with a controlling interest in the claim. New property tax laws also forced Hispanics onto the defensive. Illiteracy, and inability to read English in particular, often led to the loss of land as landholders misunderstood or were unable to read statements of new laws concerning taxes and land.<sup>7</sup>

Increasingly, Hispanics realized that they had to have some knowledge of English if they wished to retain their land and traditional livelihood.<sup>8</sup> In the turmoil created by land speculation in the late nineteenth century in New Mexico, Hispanics who secured a livelihood from subsistence farming or a small ranch could not assume that they would retain enough land to pass on to their children so that they could earn a similar livelihood. Even those forced off their lands, or those who saw their lands diminish as the state claimed title to what had been communal grazing land, found an ability to speak English a useful skill as they searched for

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<sup>6</sup> Robert Rosenbaum, *Mexicano Resistance in the Southwest: "The Sacred Right of Self-Preservation"* (Austin, Tex., 1981), 14, 99–144; Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge*, 9–12.

<sup>7</sup> For information on how land claims courts operated, see Victor Westphall, *The Public Domain in New Mexico, 1854–1891* (Albuquerque, N.M., 1965); and idem, *Mercedes Reales: Hispanic Land Grants of the Upper Rio Grande Region* (Albuquerque, N.M., 1983). From 1891 to 1904 the Court of Private Land Claims rejected two-thirds of the claims presented. It confirmed grants of some two million acres and rejected claims to thirty-three million acres. See Carolyn Zeleny, *Relations between the Spanish-Americans and Anglo-Americans in New Mexico: A Study of Conflict and Accommodation in a Dual-Ethnic Situation* (New York, 1974), 153.

<sup>8</sup> Many of the missionaries commented on the desire of Hispanics to learn English, acknowledging that many Catholic parents enrolled their children in Presbyterian schools for this reason alone. See, for instance, Annie Granger's report in *Home Mission Monthly* 2 (Apr. 1888): 133. This was also a theme in statements made by Hispanics who converted to Protestantism. Gabino Rendón, who became a Presbyterian minister, sought out teacher Annie Speakman so that she could teach him English. See Gabino Rendón, *Hand on My Shoulder* (New York, 1953), 45–46.

wage labor outside of their village. As the economies of small and remote mountain villages became tied to a larger state and national economy, parents sought to provide children with the skills necessary to assure them a range of choices and possibilities. The changing economic milieu encouraged Hispanic parents to seek schooling for their children—even when the only school in the area was run by a Presbyterian woman.

As Hispanics in northern New Mexico saw their economic situation deteriorate, Anglo-American women were being wooed by an expanding Protestant mission enterprise which promised them rewarding work, adventure, and the opportunity to serve their country. Most of the women who came to work under the auspices of the Presbyterian church's Woman's Board of Home Missions (originally known as the Woman's Executive Committee of Home Missions) were single and in their late twenties; many had some higher education, and many had prior teaching experience. They were the daughters of ministers, farmers, small-town businessmen, and less well-to-do professionals.<sup>9</sup> The women attracted to the mission movement were in some way "adrift"; they included young women waiting for marriage, single women seeking career changes, and widows looking for work to support themselves.<sup>10</sup> For these women, the home mission movement was a respectable alternative with seemingly few negative consequences. The denominational mission boards administering the enterprise were highly visible and well organized; one had only to be a regular churchgoer to be familiar with missionary activities.

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<sup>9</sup> My conclusions are based on biographical data collected on some 250 mission women assigned to work with Hispanic Catholics in the American Southwest, principally New Mexico and Colorado, in the years 1880–1930. The vast majority of women were single, were over twenty-five years old, had some postsecondary education (usually a number of years in a normal school), and had worked previously as teachers. The information was collected from a variety of sources—the mission periodicals, official correspondence, personal letters, and job applications filed with the Woman's Board. See Susan M. Yohn, "Religion, Pluralism, and the Limits of Progressive Reform: Presbyterian Women Home Missionaries in New Mexico, 1870–1930" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1987). My general observations match those of Ronald Butchart who has compiled a data base on more than 5,000 missionaries who worked with freedmen following the Civil War. See Ronald Butchart, "Recruits to the 'Army of Civilization': Gender, Race, Class, and the Freedman's Teachers, 1861–1875" (Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the Organization of American Historians, Washington, D.C., 1990). In her work on mission women assigned to China, Jane Hunter also finds the desire for "useful" work to be a motivating factor. See Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China* (New Haven, Conn., 1984), 27–51.

<sup>10</sup> Joanne Meyerowitz uses the term "adrift" to describe women who migrated to urban areas at the turn of the century, but it can also be used to apply to a number of the women who joined the mission movement. They were among the growing ranks of women who challenged traditional conceptions of domesticity by moving away from their homes and families, and entering the public sphere as wage laborers. Joanne Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners in Chicago, 1880–1930* (Chicago, 1988).

As it was work sponsored by the church, a woman signing on as a home missionary could be sure of both respectability and wide-ranging support.

In her study of women's participation in foreign missions, Patricia Hill notes that in the late nineteenth century there was an explosion in the popularity of evangelical Protestant mission movements and in women's participation in both foreign and home missions. At its peak, between 1910 and 1915, the foreign mission movement enrolled an estimated three million women who supported some forty denominational women's mission boards. In the foreign mission field alone, some nine thousand women were employed as teachers, doctors, nurses, and Bible readers.<sup>11</sup> There was an exchange of workers as women left the foreign mission field for home missions and vice versa. The women's home mission movement was smaller and received fewer funds, in part because it seemed less glamorous. Nevertheless, the Protestant mission movement—both foreign and home—attracted support from a wide cross section of Protestant American women. When the interdenominational Council of Women for Home Missions was established in 1908, its constituent Women's Home Missions Boards included those of the Baptist, Christian, Congregational, Evangelical Lutheran, Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal South, Presbyterian, Reformed Church of America, and the United Presbyterian denominations. It is difficult to say what the combined resources of the home mission movement were, but in 1924 (before it was merged with the male-dominated Board of Home Missions to become the Board of National Missions), the Woman's Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church counted 421,656 members in its women's missionary societies and young people's organizations and employed 451 missionaries. The Presbyterian board served Alaskans, Asians on the Pacific Coast, Spanish-speaking peoples, North American Indians, the Mormons of Utah, poor whites in the southern mountain regions, as well as people in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Santo Domingo. The board operated twenty-four boarding schools, twenty-one day schools serving 4,000 pupils, twenty-eight community stations from which workers made 18,000 visits to private homes, and eight medical centers which saw 49,000 patients. The budget for the 1923–24 year was \$1,120,000.<sup>12</sup>

Initially, the home mission movement's intentions were frankly imperialist. The mission literature exhorted women to "go everywhere and make all things new." The goal was to fight the variety of "isms" which mission leaders felt threatened the democratic institutions of the United

<sup>11</sup> Patricia Hill, *The World Their Household: The American Woman's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870–1920* (Ann Arbor, 1985), 1 and 195 n. 1.

<sup>12</sup> "Board Facts and Figures," *Women and Missions* 1 (Sep. 1924): 253.

States. The Presbyterian church warned its constituency about “mormonism, nihilism, communism, atheism and infidelity,” but the most dangerous, because of the growing number of adherents, was Catholicism. Would settlers on the frontier be “saved to the Kingdom of Christ or be left to the Kingdom of Satan?” One minister, intent on promoting the mission effort, warned that “romanism is there, selecting choicest locations, and securing valuable properties all over this new part of our country, Romanism teaching subjection and obedience to a foreign rule.”<sup>13</sup>

While the home mission enterprise looked to build churches throughout the western United States to minister to Anglo-Protestant settlers moving to the frontier, others were also concerned with the “foreign” peoples already living in these new territories, namely the native Americans and Hispanics. Presbyterian home missionary Sheldon Jackson was one of the leading proponents for expanding women’s mission activities. Calling attention to New Mexico, he described the area as the “center of a Mexican population of nearly 100,000, having all the rights of American citizens, and yet unassimilated, foreign, and in some measure hostile to the genius of our American institutions.” He believed that a Protestant missionary presence would prove a positive influence, that the peoples could be made into “good” citizens if there were to be an “early and persistent introduction of the leaven of Protestantism.”<sup>14</sup>

In their effort to remake Hispanic New Mexicans into American citizens, the Presbyterian mission movement championed religious conversion. They found, initially, that their efforts to “plant” Presbyterian churches were unsuccessful; Hispanic New Mexicans were unwilling to leave the Catholic church. Protestants discovered they could more successfully make headway into Hispanic communities by opening schools staffed by women missionaries.<sup>15</sup> As one spokesman for the Presbyterian mission effort explained, “plant a school in the same community, put at

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<sup>13</sup> Rev. S. W. Bain, “Woman’s Power in Saving the West,” *Home Mission Monthly* 1 (Sep. 1887): 126; *ibid.* 1 (Apr. 1887): 126.

<sup>14</sup> “A Missionary Tour through New Mexico,” *Rocky Mountain Presbyterian* 4 (Nov. 1875): 2. For a discussion of Jackson’s activism on behalf of women’s mission organizations, see Alvin Bailey, “The Strategy of Sheldon Jackson in Opening the West for National Missions, 1860–1880” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1948).

<sup>15</sup> Presbyterians were not the only denomination to open schools in New Mexico; the Methodists and Congregationalists were also active among Hispanics. Margaret Szasz, “Albuquerque Congregationalists and Southwestern Reform, 1900–1917,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 55 (July 1980): 231–52; Charles Biebel, “Cultural Change on the Southwest Frontier: Albuquerque Schooling, 1870–1895,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 55 (July 1980): 209–30; Randi Jones Walker, “Protestantism in the Sangre De Cristos: Factors in the Growth and Decline of the Hispanic Protestant Churches in Northern New Mexico and Southern Colorado, 1850–1920” (Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate School, 1983).

its head a loving, motherly woman, and with her gentleness, her neighborly ways, her modern methods of teaching, she will receive a cordial welcome from the people. The priests may threaten excommunication, but the teachers will win and lay solid, deep foundations for the Church."<sup>16</sup> The Presbyterian mission movement hoped to capitalize on what they assumed were women's "natural" propensities as caretakers of children. It was also believed that women teachers would not meet the same resistance from the traditional authorities, precisely because they were women and thought to be less threatening.<sup>17</sup>

The shift in focus by the Presbyterian church—from building churches to building schools—coincided with growing demands from Hispanic Catholics for an improved school system. While the territorial legislature had created a Board of Education and the office of territorial superintendent as early as 1863, the public schools in New Mexico were poorly staffed, open only a few months a year, badly financed, and plagued by charges of corruption. In the years after the United States annexed the territory in 1848, many attempts were made to create a unified state system. Justices of the Peace in each county were authorized to conduct school matters such as hiring teachers. In 1872 the legislature called for a system of elected county boards of supervisors and school directors. This system was soon undermined by charges of corruption. Justices were accused of hiring family members or political cronies to teach regardless of their qualifications. Not until 1889 did the legislature declare that "anyone who cannot read and write sufficiently to keep his own records in Spanish and English shall not be employed as a teacher."<sup>18</sup>

The underlying problem facing advocates of public education in New Mexico was how to support a school system. In 1855 and 1856 the

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<sup>16</sup> Henry E. Gordon, "Monthly Topic—The Roman Catholics," *Home Mission Monthly* 5 (Apr. 1891): 129.

<sup>17</sup> This did not necessarily hold true. Women were the subject of much gossip and were maligned by priests. After being threatened, some women feared for their safety. Most found that, at the very least, their "respectability" was impugned. In an effort to thwart such rumors, mission teachers opened their private lives to public scrutiny. Missionaries were also well aware of how their "femaleness" often served to protect them from the worst of dangers. One, a Miss Dox, reported how a priest misrepresented her work, turning the townspeople against her. They demanded that she leave town. She wrote that "there is something after all in sending a woman all alone; if I had been a man they would have shot me down like a dog and thought they were doing God's service, but because I was a woman and all alone their sympathies for me were finally aroused in my helpless condition; not able to understand their language, not able to help myself in any way, they decided to leave me until morning." In this case, a Hispanic convert intervened, and explained that Dox had been misrepresented. She remained in the community and said that "that very action of the priest was the means of filling my little school to overflowing." See "Words from Workers," *Home Mission Monthly* 8 (July 1893): 200.

<sup>18</sup> Tom Wiley, *Politics and Purse Strings in New Mexico's Public Schools* (Albuquerque, N.M., 1968), 30.

legislature tried to extract a tax of one dollar from each property owner. Large landowners successfully evaded the tax, leaving the small property holder to shoulder a burden he could not afford. In 1872 and 1876, the legislature tried again, placing the burden on Hispanic New Mexicans by levying fines for participation in activities central to Hispanic village life. The legislature directed that fines be collected from those who buried their dead on Sundays, who participated in Sunday sports like cockfighting, or who married "close relatives." All these fines were to go into the county school fund. Not surprisingly, these measures were not very popular with the majority of Hispanic New Mexicans. In predominantly Hispanic villages, where the people responsible for enforcing this legislation participated in any number of these activities, the law went unenforced and school coffers remained empty.<sup>19</sup>

The Catholic church attempted to address educational needs by opening a number of schools, but they tended to serve the children of wealthier Hispanics.<sup>20</sup> In the latter part of the nineteenth century the church was in the midst of reorganizing and consolidating its control over Hispanic Catholics of the territory. Like the Protestant churches entering the territory after annexation, the Catholic church saw itself as an agent of "Americanization." It condemned social practices it deemed to be immoral, such as gambling and dancing, and argued that its role was to remove "immorality from the family," and allow "morality, virtue and religion . . . to flourish in the desert of past passions."<sup>21</sup> In addition, it attempted to exercise greater control over the Penitentes, a lay movement that had overseen religious activities after religious orders had been expelled following Mexican independence from Spain. While most His-

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<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of the development of a public school system in New Mexico, see *ibid.*; and Jane Atkins, "Who Will Educate?: The Schooling Question in Territorial New Mexico, 1846–1911" (Ph.D. diss., University of New Mexico, 1982).

<sup>20</sup> In 1870, there were forty-four primary schools in New Mexico, only five of which were public. The majority of these schools were conducted by the Catholic church. Of the 29,312 school-age children in the territory, only 5,114 attended any school at all. See Dianna Everett, "The Public School Debate in New Mexico, 1850–1891," *Arizona and the West* 26 (Summer 1984): 110.

<sup>21</sup> Rev. James H. Defouri, *Historical Sketch of the Catholic Church in New Mexico* (San Francisco, Calif., 1887), 142. For more information on the role of the Catholic church in this period, see Louis Avant, "The History of Catholic Education in New Mexico since the American Occupation" (M.A. thesis, University of New Mexico, 1940); Paul Horgan, *Lamy of Santa Fe, His Life and Times* (New York, 1975); J. B. Salpointe, *Soldiers of the Cross: Notes on the Ecclesiastical History of New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado* (Albuquerque, N.M., 1967); Louis Warner, *Archbishop Lamy: An Epochmaker* (Santa Fe, N.M., 1936); Howard Lamar, *The Far Southwest, 1846–1912: A Territorial History* (New York, 1970).

panic Catholics remained in the church, many Hispanics were critical of its policies.<sup>22</sup>

As it established its network of mission schools, the Presbyterian church was able to capitalize on the deteriorating economic situation, the demand for schooling, and the tensions that existed between Hispanics and the Catholic hierarchy. The Catholic church tried a variety of methods to dissuade parents from sending their children to Protestant mission schools, including threatening parents with excommunication. As one archbishop noted in explaining the defiance of Hispanic parents: "Try and persuade a Mexican not to send his children to such a school and to deprive him of the only available opportunity of giving his children an education, and he will answer: 'for the love of God, Bishop what shall I do? Why do you not give us schools as the Protestants do?'"<sup>23</sup>

By the turn of the century, the Presbyterian church had opened some forty schools in northern New Mexico which would be staffed by approximately two hundred and fifty women over these years. Most of these schools were what were called "plaza" schools—small one-room schools that provided primary education. The church also maintained two boarding schools—one for girls, the other for boys—which served as secondary schools. The plaza schools were located in the small and remote villages in northern New Mexico, while the boarding schools were in Santa Fe, the capital, and Albuquerque, one of the commercial centers in the territory. These schools were the means by which the Presbyterians intended to promote their "Americanization" efforts; it was here that Hispanics were to learn the benefits that came with conversion to Protestantism. The original curriculum relied heavily on the Bible. Lessons were based on biblical passages, readings came from the Bible, the songs sung were hymns, and the children were given Bibles to take home and pictures of Jesus to hang on the walls of their homes.<sup>24</sup>

The church expected that mission teachers would serve as examples of the superiority of Anglo-Protestant culture in all aspects of their lives—in their role as teacher, as housekeeper, as community leader. To prove

<sup>22</sup> For a history of the Penitentes, see Marta Weigle, *Brothers of Light, Brothers of Blood: The Penitentes of the Southwest* (Albuquerque, N.M., 1976). She argues that Penitentes, for example, made distinctions between what they believed to be "true" Catholicism, that which Hispanics had traditionally practiced, and that which was introduced by the new Catholic hierarchy after U.S. annexation (p. 76).

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Walker, "Protestantism in the Sangre de Christos," 64.

<sup>24</sup> For a general overview of these schools, see Ruth Barber and Edith Agnew, *Sowers Went Forth: The Story of Presbyterian Missions in New Mexico and Southern Colorado* (Albuquerque, N.M., 1981); and Carolyn Atkins, "Menaul School: 1881–1930 . . . Not Leaders, Merely, but Christian Leaders," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 58 (Winter 1980): 279–97.

that they were having the intended impact, mission teachers reported that they could see extensive changes in the lifestyles of Hispanic neighbors. The children, they noted, were cleaner, more neatly dressed, and the houses kept tidier. Chairs and tables were appearing in homes where previously one was forced to sit on the dirt floor, and villagers were eating with knives and forks. Prior to intervention, argued missionaries, the "average Mexican" had been "thriftless, unprogressive, ignorant, and superstitious." However, these old habits were disappearing and "many [were] seeking the light." One missionary noted that now "there is a spirit of inquiry among the Mexicans and a readiness to read the printed page." According to teachers, Hispanics were picking up and imitating American customs.<sup>25</sup>

The accounts that missionaries provided to their supporters painted a rosy picture about their successes, but the reality was a great deal more complicated. Hispanics did not convert in large numbers. Fewer than 10 percent became Protestant.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, it is even questionable if the Hispanic "imitation" of "American" customs that missionaries noted was not just the result of an encroaching industrial economy. These changes might well have occurred with or without the presence of the mission enterprise as New Mexico became more integrated into the larger United States economy.

What, then, was the impact of the Protestant mission enterprise? First and foremost, Anglo-Protestant women provided thousands of Hispanic children with more extensive educational opportunities than were provided by the public school system. After initial hesitation by Hispanic parents, mission women reported that their schools were full; one, the

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<sup>25</sup> "Mission Work in New Mexico," *Home Mission Monthly* 1 (Sep. 1887): 249.

<sup>26</sup> The breakdown among religious denominations in New Mexico was: 1890—Roman Catholic 95.8 percent, Protestant 2.9 percent, other 1.2 percent; 1906—Roman Catholic 90.2 percent, Protestant 6.4 percent, other 3.3 percent; 1916—Roman Catholic 84.7 percent, Protestant 11.7 percent, other 3.7 percent. Figures reported in United States Bureau of Census, *Religious Bodies, 1916*, Part 1, *Summary and General Tables* (Washington, D.C., 1916), 113. It is difficult to ascertain from these figures how many of the Protestants were Hispanic, because the census listed Hispanics as white. The increasing percentage of Protestants also reflects the growing number of Anglo-Europeans moving into New Mexico in this period. Prior to 1900 the two largest Protestant denominations were Methodist (stronger in the South) and Presbyterian (stronger in the North). See Mark Bunker, "Jose Ynes Perea and Hispanic Presbyterianism in New Mexico," *Religion and Society in the American West: Historical Essays*, ed. Carl Guarneri and David Alvarez (Lanham, Md., 1987), 99 n. 2. Ferenc M. Szasz estimates that no more than 5 percent of all southwestern Protestants were Hispanic. (*The Protestant Clergy in the Great Plains and Mountain West, 1865–1915* [Albuquerque, N.M., 1988], 1949.) Walker cites figures from the Census Bureau's *Religious Bodies* for the five New Mexico counties most heavily populated by Hispanics in 1910 and 1920 and finds that the percentage of Protestants averaged 3.5 percent in 1910 and 3.6 percent in 1920 ("Protestantism in Sangre de Christos," 197).

mission school at Ranchos de Taos, was reported to be the largest day school in the territory in 1894, with an enrollment of 135.<sup>27</sup> For a very small proportion of these students, the mission enterprise provided an additional opportunity for a secondary education that was not otherwise available.<sup>28</sup> The historian examining the mission enterprise cannot afford to underestimate the role that Hispanic demand for education played in the expansion of this network of mission schools. To do so is to run the risk of overlooking one of the ways in which Hispanics attempted to exercise power and to assert control over their lives.

The experience of mission women exposes a very elaborate negotiation between missionary and client. Historian Sarah Deutsch has illustrated how little effect missionaries had in actually subverting Hispanic traditions. Instead, they introduced new rituals and new organizations that "complemented" rather than "competed with traditional gatherings."<sup>29</sup> Deutsch has attributed to mission women the role of "social director," arguing that mission women were "allotted," by Anglo-Protestant society, the "role of social control and cultural bearer."<sup>30</sup> While

<sup>27</sup> Enos E. Garcia, "History of Education in Taos County" (M.A. thesis, University of New Mexico, 1950), 65. In 1891 the superintendent of schools in New Mexico reported that there were 29 schools run by the Presbyterian church averaging 35 students each. In 1893, 17 schools reported an average of 60 students. The schools reporting the highest enrollments in 1891 were Santa Fe (70 students), Raton (50), Prado de Taos (60), Fernandez de Taos (66), and Ranchos de Taos (60). In 1894 those with highest enrollments were Las Cruces (91 students), Raton (170), Prado de Taos (82), and Ranchos de Taos (115). See *Territory of New Mexico, Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction* (Santa Fe, N.M., 1892 and 1894), 18.

<sup>28</sup> Following is the breakdown of students enrolled in school in New Mexico—1870–71: 1,320; 1879–80: 4,755; 1889–90: 18,215; 1899–1900: 36,735; 1909–10: 56,304; 1917–18: 85,677. The steady increase can be attributed to the influx of new residents and the expansion of the public school system. Of the 85,677 students enrolled in 1918, 3,760 attended secondary school, and 734 were enrolled in private and parochial schools. See Department of Interior, Bureau of Education, "Status of School Systems, 1917–1918," *Bulletin*, no. 11 (Washington, D.C., 1920), 95–99 (tables 23–25). In 1912, 1,472 students were enrolled in public high schools and 237 in private high schools (one Presbyterian high school, one Baptist, and five Catholic). Of the twenty-five public high schools, only five were in towns located in traditionally Hispanic areas or the northern part of the state, and these were in towns with a significant Anglo population. See Department of Interior, Bureau of Education, "Public and Private High Schools," *Bulletin*, no. 22 (Washington, D.C., 1912), 14, 27, 36, 192. In the Raton high school, which graduated its first students in 1887, no student with a Spanish surname graduated until 1908. Another was graduated in 1911, and one in 1918, with a gradual increase thereafter. See Carson Crecy, "A History of Public Schools of Raton, New Mexico" (M.A. thesis, University of New Mexico, 1941), appendix. The private secondary schools graduated twenty-five students in 1912, nineteen from Catholic schools, and six from the Presbyterian school. Three students graduating from private schools were listed as having prepared for college. They were all graduates of the Presbyterian Menaul School. See Bureau of Education, *Bulletin*, 192 (Table 35).

<sup>29</sup> Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge*, 83.

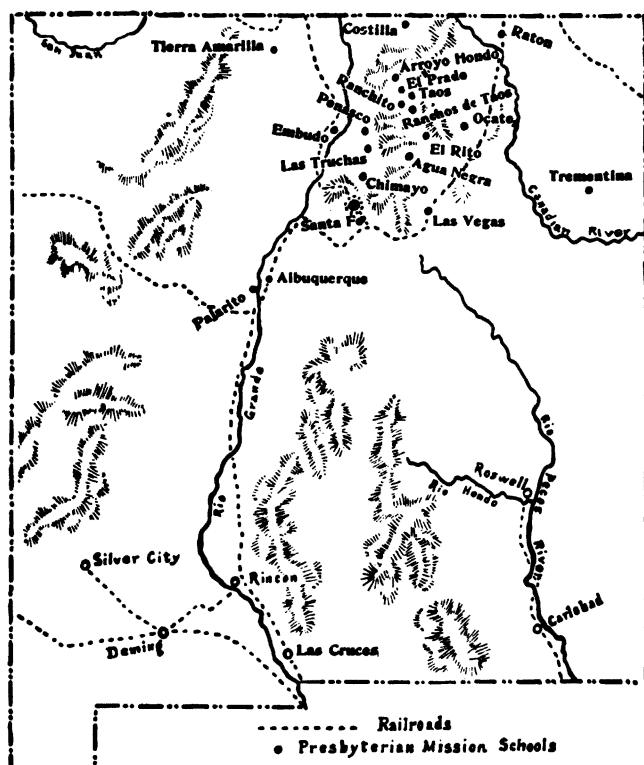
<sup>30</sup> She also argues that it was left to Hispanic women villagers to "adopt" the roles of "social integrator and cultural and community maintainer." Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge*, 85.

mission women were indeed “allotted” this role of social control, they actually exercised little of that control over their clients. Missionaries may well have been the “bearers” of certain cultural mores, they might also have acted as “directors,” but the extent of their actual “control” is debatable.

Ideally, missionaries would have liked to exert control over their Hispanic neighbors, but they were never to do so as fully as they had intended. At first, they organized programs that they hoped would lead Hispanics to convert. When Hispanics did not evince interest in this regard, missionaries introduced a different strategy to “Americanize” Hispanics. They initiated a variety of social services and programs to complement the schooling they offered, assuming that over time Hispanics would assimilate. Although assimilation into Anglo-American society was the goal, the movement evolved as a continually interacting process involving all parties. Mission teachers could not pass along customs and manners without themselves being changed in the process. By de-emphasizing conversion as a critical part of the Americanization process, missionaries had adopted a secular conception of what it meant to be American, thereby taking a significant step away from the evangelistic commitment that had led them to the movement originally.

As Hispanic culture in New Mexico changed through resistance and adaptation to encroaching Anglo culture, so also Anglo culture gained the ability to adapt to Hispanic culture, in part because of mission women’s redefinition of their role. As the missionaries redefined “success” in secular terms, both at New Mexico stations and in the larger mission enterprise, they replaced their early “imperialist” goal and agenda with a form of “cultural pluralism” that recognized the validity of Hispanic culture but retained a central role for missionaries as mediators between the two cultures. Appreciating social diversity while emphasizing the reformer’s role, the mission teachers reflected the larger Progressive impulses of their day. In the same fashion as liberal progressives, mission teachers came to espouse a concept of humanitarian social democracy, drawing on a “language of social bonds” and talking of family and community. Like their Progressive contemporaries, missionaries shared contradictory ideas and ambivalences regarding social diversity and pluralism. Historian Rivka Lissak has suggested that Progressives were not able to reach a consensus on these issues of assimilation or pluralism. Instead, Progressives ambivalently alternated between those Anglo-Americans who called on immigrant groups (or those deemed foreign) to acculturate and acquire the dominant Anglo values, and representatives of immigrant groups who espoused Israel Zangwill’s concept of the “melting pot” or Horace Kallen’s ideas of “cultural pluralism.” Unable to resolve the tensions between their own commitment to social unity and

## MAP SHOWING OUR MISSION SCHOOLS IN NEW MEXICO



*Home Mission Monthly*, Nov. 1908. Courtesy of Department of History, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Philadelphia, Pa.

the cultural diversity which flourished in the immigrant communities around them, Progressives expressed contradictory ideas "simultaneously," speaking of "mutual esteem and respect of variety and in favor of cross-fertilization."<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Daniel Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," 10 *Reviews in American History* (Dec. 1982), 113–32. Rivka Shpak Lissak, *Pluralism and Progressives: Hull House and the New Immigrants, 1890–1919* (Chicago, 1989), 4, 145–49, 8–9.

Among mission teachers in New Mexico, the evolution of a more pluralist ethic was by no means uniform. Missionaries who were in the field for many years were quite conscious of the fact that their impressions, their understandings, of Hispanic culture had changed. Their reports illustrate a wide range of relationships between mission women and their Hispanic neighbors. Indeed, what is impressive about missionary reports from the field, published in the *Home Mission Monthly*, is the degree to which missionaries themselves are the subject rather than their Hispanic clients.

Over the eight years she taught in Raton, missionary Delia Hills claimed success in Americanizing her students. She reported, for instance, that "the children are taking delight in American ways and American customs," though she did not specify what she meant by this. She no longer saw "national peculiarities," and argued that they had "disappeared, completely," in some instances. From these reports one might conclude that Hispanics in Raton had been assimilated; however, other letters from Hills suggest that in the process of doing her work she had become more sympathetic to Hispanic culture and found herself more distant from her own. After seven years as a missionary, Hills wrote that the "novelty of strange sight and sounds" had worn off. She found it difficult to write about her work, it was as if she were "writing about one's own family duties, family cares and family perplexities." Because she had become a part of the community, she did not feel that it called forth the "same comment" it had early in her career. She confessed that she often "yearn[ed] for the companionship of some American friend," but she also felt that "it would be a decided novelty to be suddenly placed among American people and in a school of American pupils." "I am afraid," she concluded, that "I should be continually asking, 'Do you understand?'"<sup>32</sup>

For many missionaries the friendships they established with Hispanics played a significant role in challenging their original impressions. One is struck by how deeply Hills cared for those Hispanics with whom she had become friends. When her mother, who was also her companion, died, Hills wrote that "for more than twenty years my mother and I had not been separated for more than one week, and for sixteen years at least, we had not been separated a single night. And in the daytime, if she was not with me, when I had to leave home for an hour or two, she was waiting my return with the words, 'I am so glad you have come, my

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<sup>32</sup> Delia Hills, "Signs of Promise in the Mexican Field," *Home Mission Monthly* 10 (Nov. 1985): 18; idem, "A Package of Letters," *Home Mission Monthly* 8 (Nov. 1893): 6.

child.' And now, I come and go alone." Despairing of her mother's absence, she turned to the friendships she had established with the Hispanics in Raton. She found one source of support among a group of Presbyterian Hispanic women she had organized into a Home Missionary Society. Writing about this group one year after her mother's death, Hills noted sadly that the treasurer, Savinista Padilla, had died. Padilla, Hills remembered, was the "first Mexican woman with whom I became acquainted and I loved her."<sup>33</sup>

Her friendships with Hispanic women as well as her admission that her life and work had placed her outside of Anglo society, suggest Hills's recognition that "cross fertilization" was taking place. Her own ambivalence about these events is evident in her declaration that Hispanics were becoming Americanized. However, in her admonitions to her Anglo readers, she urged them to continue to support her work even as she grew more sympathetic to the community in which she found herself; "familiarity," she argued, did not "lessen the amount of work to be done . . . only increases the opportunities for work, and the work that I do in different channels is only limited by my strength."<sup>34</sup>

Hills expressed her confusion about cultural differences in very personal terms, preferring to use familial metaphors to describe the evolving relationship between herself and her students and neighbors. Other missionaries came to recognize that in their position of straddling two cultures, they could expand their influence and the scope of their work. Mollie Clements, who taught in the San Juan Valley in southern Colorado for thirty-one years beginning in 1891, refused to think of herself only as a teacher, choosing to define her role broadly, supposing to "know all that is desirable, and make it a rule to try and satisfy all the applications for assistance." She described her work as requiring that she care for people's minds, souls, and bodies. Though she put schoolwork first, she was distressed by the impoverished conditions, and felt that she should contribute more of herself. She rounded out her days by leaving the schoolhouse to nurse the sick, to help sew clothes, and to settle accounts for the men.<sup>35</sup>

Clements's descriptions of the Hispanics she worked with were not without racial stereotypes. She could, in one sentence, call Hispanics "sickly and immoral," but then in another assert that they were "bright, uncomplaining, and naturally sympathetic." Unlike Hills, who under-

<sup>33</sup> Hills, "Words from Workers," *Home Mission Monthly* 8 (Nov. 1893): 137; *ibid.*, "Synodical and Presbyterial Items," 9 (May 1894): 166.

<sup>34</sup> Hills, "Words from Workers," 7.

<sup>35</sup> Mollie Clements, "A Package of Letters," *Home Mission Monthly* 8 (July 1893): 8.

stood her mission to be to erase “national peculiarities,” Clements favored some form of cultural exchange, recognizing that Anglo-Americans did have lessons to learn from Hispanics. She lauded her neighbors, for instance, for their ability to share possessions; they were able to “enjoy the good fortune of [another] without coveting it.” She contradicted commonly held assumptions among Anglos about the nature of sexual relations among Hispanics. Young men and women were never permitted to be alone, she reported; parents closely supervised all meetings. Clements’s reports also show how mission women increasingly balanced spiritual with material concerns. In 1893 she indicated that she had begun to wonder how the poor in her community lived. Rather than comment on the state of their souls or reflect on the reasons for their impoverished condition, she took a very practical view, wishing that she could give those poorer students of hers “one good substantial meal a day.”<sup>36</sup>

Other missionaries took up where Clements left off; they sought out the formal training necessary to provide the many secular services Clements felt were needed. In expanding their duties, they further enmeshed themselves in Hispanic communities, emerging as the most articulate and least ambivalent of Anglo proponents of pluralism. Alice Blake, a missionary for some forty years, sought additional training in both teaching and public health, even joining with the Children’s Bureau to help conduct studies on children’s health.<sup>37</sup> Blake’s career best illustrates the variety of roles that mission teachers took on. By the time she retired from her post in Trementina, New Mexico, Blake had turned her teaching duties over to another teacher so that she could oversee the variety of other services that she had introduced. In her thirty-two years in this town, Blake was instrumental in establishing a post office, in raising the money to build a windmill and dig a community well, and in undertaking a number of campaigns to improve health and sanitary conditions. Blake’s school had become a community center, and Blake herself had become an advocate for those among whom she worked.<sup>38</sup>

Alice Blake remembered that at the outset of her career she had felt that she had been assigned to “Sodom and Gomorrah.” Yet as she came

<sup>36</sup> Mollie Clements, “La Maestra,” *Home Mission Monthly* 10 (Nov. 1895): 6; *idem*, “A Package of Letters,” *Home Mission Monthly* 8 (Nov. 1893): 8.

<sup>37</sup> See “Editorial Notes,” *Home Mission Monthly* 37 (Jan. 1922): 65, for the announcement that Blake had completed a course in public health at New York University. She continued to aid the half-time county health officer by vaccinating the people in the Trementina area. For a discussion of her medical work, see Blake, “Visits and Visitations,” *Women and Missions* 4 (July 1927): 147.

<sup>38</sup> For biographical information on Blake, see Cheryl J. Foote, “Alice Blake of Trementina: Mission Teacher of the Southwest,” *Journal of Presbyterian History* 60 (Fall 1982): 228–42; and Alice Blake biographical file (H5), Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia (PHS).

to understand the extent of the poverty in which Hispanics lived, she changed her initial judgments—Hispanics were not individually responsible for their impoverished conditions. Of all the mission women in the New Mexico field, Blake seems to have arrived at one of the most sophisticated understandings of the impact of the economic and political changes affecting Hispanics. Forced to move from one location because her clients had been evicted from their land, Blake spoke critically of the role “landgrabbers” had played in undermining community stability.<sup>39</sup>

In her memoirs, written after her retirement, Blake warned of “how many people there are who are wont to bolster up a prejudice with any passing impression that would seem to justify it.” She took issue with a friend who, passing through New Mexico, had said, “‘of all the places I have seen, New Mexico is positively the most worthless. It is nothing but a great desert.’” In reply, Blake quoted another missionary who sang New Mexico’s praises, pointing to the “beautiful and wonderful everywhere.” She argued that one should think of the Hispanic people in this way as well, and she concluded that “a casual visitor might easily note only what seems to him uncouth and unpromising; where one who had had the opportunity of knowing them intimately will have discovered many beauties of character and admirable attributes.”<sup>40</sup>

In the cases of Blake, Clements, and Hills, the goal was the same, to maintain their central position in the reform movement and to convince Anglo supporters that mission work was essential in promoting understanding between these two very different cultures. Mission women did not relinquish their belief in the importance of conversion to Protestantism or renounce racial stereotypes. They did not see Hispanics as their equals; but by entering into these small Hispanic villages, they had become familiar with a culture that they could not quickly or easily cast out as worthless. Unable to convert Hispanics or to remake them in their own image, mission women settled for promoting “understanding,” “co-operation,” and “social harmony” between Anglo and Hispanic cultures.

What did it mean to mediate between the two cultures? First and foremost, one did not want to alienate students. Missionaries changed how they conducted their classrooms. Many learned early on in their tenure to temper their emphasis on conversion. Instead they stressed basic

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<sup>39</sup> Alice Blake, “Memoirs of Alice Blake: Interviews with Missionaries, Teachers, and Others in Northern New Mexico” (unpublished manuscript, Menaul Historical Library of the Southwest, Albuquerque, N.M.), 216, 2.

<sup>40</sup> Blake, “Memoirs,” epilogue, unpageg. While her memoirs were never published, Blake wrote them with the idea that they would be. She was disappointed when the mission administration did not feel them worthy of being published. See letter from Robert McLean to Paul Warnshuis, 14 Oct. 1935, Blake biographical file (H5).

services like teaching or providing rudimentary health care. One woman, a Mrs. Dilley, remembered that early in her career she had pressed a young student to convert, only to discover that the child had been taken from school and whipped; this experience convinced her that it was “folly to meddle with their [Hispanic students’] religious views.” As early as 1895, teachers were encouraging each other to allow the “children’s everyday experiences” to be the missionary’s guide for planning lessons rather than to impose a predetermined Christian curriculum. At the meeting of the First Institute of Presbyterian Mission Teachers in the New Mexico synod, teacher Mary Dissette delivered a talk in which she urged teachers to find points of similarity. She urged teachers not to draw “sharp contrasts,” and to find a “common ground instead of antagonizing them [the students].”<sup>41</sup>

If finding a “common ground” was intended to win Hispanic support in hopes that they might convert or become more like missionaries, this goal also led missionaries to modify their own behavior and ideas about “culture.” Classes were supposed to be conducted in English, but many missionaries found this was not practical. Instead they taught in both English and Spanish, dividing their days between the two languages, or teaching in Spanish until individual students had learned English. Their goal was to make English the primary language, but through their teaching, many of them became familiar with a language that they had originally condemned as alien.

As mission women learned about Hispanic culture, they passed some of their lessons on to their Anglo-Protestant supporters. Articles about the much-dreaded Penitentes continued to appear in the *Home Mission Monthly*, but supporters of the mission enterprise could also read about the day-to-day customs of Hispanics. Missionaries provided detailed descriptions about how food was prepared, about courtship and marriage customs, and about how the “fine” blankets of Chimayo were produced.<sup>42</sup> Missionaries did not simply teach the Hispanics they lived among. Their experiences, their reports, informed a larger group of mission supporters. The *Home Mission Monthly* became the vehicle by which Anglo supporters could inform themselves about Hispanic culture. They could read the missionaries’ descriptions of Hispanic customs; the magazine allowed people to “travel” to New Mexico without being there physically. Articles provided overviews of the geography, bibliographies listed references for

<sup>41</sup> (Mrs.) S. V. Dilley, “Words from Workers,” *Home Mission Monthly* 3 (Apr. 1889): 131; Mary Dissette, “Untitled,” *Home Mission Monthly* 9 (June 1895): 175–76.

<sup>42</sup> “Mexican Cookery,” *Home Mission Monthly* 16 (Nov. 1901): 6; “Mexican Marriages,” *ibid.* 16 (Nov. 1901): 10; “Blanket Weaving,” *ibid.* 18 (Nov. 1903): 10.

those who wanted to do more reading, maps of New Mexico marked the locations of mission stations, and Spanish words were written so as to indicate the proper pronunciation.<sup>43</sup>

By stating their desire to bridge differences and to find “common ground” between Anglos and Hispanics, missionaries signaled a commitment to pluralism which called on Anglo-Protestants to educate themselves about other peoples living within United States boundaries. By arguing in favor of a kind of cooperation that sought to find “common ground,” missionaries called into question Anglo ethnocentrism. They suggested that it was not just Hispanic culture that was in need of revision but also their own. This shift in mission women’s thinking, away from an ethnocentric to a more pluralist ideal, proved to be advantageous. Their concern was not to develop a new egalitarian ethic; mission women believed that, vis-à-vis the Hispanic community, they were in a position of authority. It was rather an attempt on the part of missionaries in the field to assert their own power within the larger mission enterprise. They could not deliver the large numbers of converts that the Presbyterian church desired, but they could become “experts,” so to speak, on the conditions and problems facing Hispanics. Instead of imposing the imperialist agenda that had led to the formation of the enterprise, mission women learned that a more complex ethic was necessary if they were to reach their students and build careers for themselves.

These attempts by missionaries to give voice to a new ethic required that the organization for which they worked, the Woman’s Board of Home Missions, rethink its original agenda. One sees a gradual shift in mission policy as individual teachers and missionaries implemented new ideas and programs to address the needs of their students and hold the support of their Hispanic neighbors. By 1912 the rhetoric of mission leaders testified to the new aim of the movement, that of promoting “social harmony.” Katherine Bennett, the leader of the Woman’s Board in 1912, spoke of the goals in very different terms than had Sheldon Jackson or the others who had helped give birth to the organization in the 1870s. Bennett argued that the “assimilation of foreigners” did not mean “transforming them into men and women like our fathers and forefathers, for that would be impossible.” She refused to lay the blame for the nation’s problems on “foreigners.” Instead, she suggested that it might well be the immigrant or “foreigner” who would remind Anglo-

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<sup>43</sup> “New Mexico Location, Climate, and Products,” *Home Mission Monthly* 24 (Nov. 1909): 4; “Mexicans in the United States—Bibliography,” *ibid.* 21 (Nov. 1906): 18; “Stations among Mexicans in the United States,” *ibid.* 23 (Nov. 1908): 17; “Pronunciation of Names of Stations,” *ibid.* 16 (Nov. 1901): 10.

Americans of national ideals. Immigrants were able to rise above the “sordidness, the meanness, the cheapness of life about [them],” she argued, and were to be recognized, applauded, and aided.<sup>44</sup> Accepting that there would be cultural differences, Bennett, like her employees in the field, refocused the enterprise’s efforts to combat the impoverished conditions of clients. This shift in strategy also suggests that the enterprise had stopped thinking of “foreigners” as potential subversives.

Katherine Bennett called on the Anglo-Protestant supporters of the home mission enterprise to “free” themselves “from prejudice, social, economic, or racial.” In her study of rescue homes in the American West, Peggy Pascoe has argued that home missionaries were “antiracists” in that they “anticipated” the distinction that would be made in this century between “biologically determined race and socially constructed culture,” but they were not cultural relativists; they believed their mores and habits to be superior, and they expected their clients to be transformed.<sup>45</sup> Bennett and her supporters did not make clear to what end Anglo-Protestant women would “free” themselves of prejudice. While the women in this movement were increasingly critical of materialism and commercialism, they did not propose to restructure the economic system. They also lacked a clear definition of what it meant to be “American.” Their emphasis on social diversity, cooperation, understanding, and their search for a “common ground,” suggest, however, that they recognized the ways ethnicity and race could separate people.

As suggested here, mission women’s initial expectations were not met. The result was that they had to confront the issue of cultural pluralism. In this particular case, they had to respond to Hispanic clients who were selective about what they took from the mission enterprise. Mission women had to accommodate the resistance they met. By deemphasizing conversion, they also dropped their insistence on conformity and threw into question the original goal of building a Protestant America. Mission teachers let go of the orthodoxy that had drawn them to the mission movement, and they encouraged their supporters to do the same. Implicit in their emphasis on “cooperation” was a recognition that they were engaged in relationships of give-and-take.

The home mission organizations were among the many voluntary and philanthropic agencies dominated by women. Study of these has led many historians to conclude, as does Katherine Sklar, that “social policy was shaped more by voluntary associations than by legislators and civil

<sup>44</sup> “Editorial Notes,” *Home Mission Monthly* 26 (Mar. 1912): 110.

<sup>45</sup> Katherine Bennett, “Conservation of National Ideals,” *Home Mission Monthly* 26 (Sep. 1912): 274; Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue*, 143.

servants.”<sup>46</sup> White middle-class women were able to use social reform, and by extension the welfare state, as a vehicle to exercise considerable influence at a time when they were otherwise politically disenfranchised.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, the “bargaining” relationship that evolved between social reformer and client also provided additional entree to the state to those groups of people whom Protestant Anglo-Americans had earlier thought were less suited for citizenship. The mission schools in New Mexico illustrate this dynamic process underlying the development of the welfare state. Their example also suggests that the welfare agencies, which would emerge to provide many of the services once rendered by missionaries, were much more than simply instruments of social control by which a dominant class molded those less powerful.

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<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, “Gender and the Origins of the Welfare State,” *Radical History Review* 43 (Winter 1989): 114.

<sup>47</sup> For a report on the work being done in this area and a general overview, see *ibid.*, 112–19.